

THE CRISIS IN NEPAL

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

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THE CRISIS IN NEPAL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 1:33 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James A. Leach (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. LEACH. The Subcommittee will come to order. On behalf of the Subcommittee, I would like to welcome our distinguished witness to the hearing this afternoon. I would note that we were originally scheduled to have Assistant Secretary Rocca appear before us today. However, she is under the weather and so we are able to have a substitute, and that substitute will be Donald Camp, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the South Asian Bureau of the Department of State. Don, we appreciate your many years of public service, and look forward to your testimony.

As my colleagues know, sandwiched between China and India, and home to the soaring Himalayan Mountains, Nepal has long been known as one of the most beautiful countries in the planet, and I say that with great care, because as an Iowan, I have been trying to teach the world that flat is beautiful, but there are people that think that mountains are handsome as well.

In any regard, a constitutional monarchy since 1990, Nepal has long enjoyed good relations with the United States at the governmental level, while people-to-people ties have also been robust, nurtured in part by the many dedicated Peace Corps volunteers who serve so ably in the world's only Hindu kingdom.

Tragically, however, each year since the onset of a Maoist rebellion in 1996, has seen this country of 24 million people ever more starkly challenged, not only by ruthless insurgents, but by a panoply of development, governmental and human rights problems that have converged to potentially jeopardize the viability of the State itself.

In the most recent and serious manifestation of Nepal's distress, King Gyanendra sacked the Government on February 1, declaring a state of emergency that sharply curtailed civil liberties, and took over the reins of government.

His dismissal of the Government was the third since Parliament was resolved in 2002 when the King first appointed pro-royalist figures to run the Government under his direction.

Meanwhile, the King attempted to justify the current crackdown on the tenuous assertion that the former Government had failed to

move forward toward national elections and dialogue with rebels, as well as, even more doubtfully, the need to defend multiparty democracy.

As the country has lurched from crisis to crisis, the concern of outside parties has grown commensurately, particularly in Delhi, London, and Washington. As we have learned all too painfully over the last half-century of international relations, the United States cannot afford to remain indifferent when geographically remote areas, whether in Afghanistan or Cambodia, come to be dominated by extremist elements with a brutal and hostile agenda.

In this context, from a congressional perspective, the U.S. and other concerned members of the international community have no credible alternative other than to register our deep concern at the latest turn of events and urge in no uncertain terms that the King move quickly to restore constitutional rule and multiparty democracy.

It is self-evident that the countries and organizations with the most extensive ties to Nepal—India, the United States, the U.K., EU, and UN—must work together to forge a commonsense agenda designed to bring the King back from an authoritarian precipice, which could too easily accelerate a violent Maoist takeover of the Government. The question, however, is whether it is too late, and if not, how best to avoid worse case outcomes.

In this regard the Subcommittee has a number of questions for our Administration witness, including what is the status of detained political leaders and human rights activists; how many are under arrest, and has the U.S. sought and received access to these people?

What levers can and should the international community bring to bear in order to influence the decisionmaking of the Royal Government? For example, should donors contemplate targeted economic and diplomatic measures designed to exert pressure on the King, the council ministers, and the Royal Nepal Army?

India and the United Kingdom have frozen military assistance. Yet, the United States has not. Why is Washington not moving in coordination with its friends and allies?

Have the King's actions made Nepal more or less able to combat the Maoist threat with a credible counterinsurgency strategy? If Nepal is less secure because of the Royal takeover, what are the prospects for a collapse of central authority and a takeover by the Maoists?

As Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have pointed out in several recent reports, many Nepalese appear more concerned by violence from the State Security Forces than the Maoists. How can concerned outside parties help convince the authorities in Kathmandu to restore fundamental freedoms and meaningfully address enforced disappearances, and other manifestations of Nepal's human rights crisis?

Over the years, Congress has uniquely identified with the Tibetan people, and the preservation of their unique cultural heritage. In this regard I understand that on January 21 that several Tibetan welfare offices that tend to the needs of the substantial refugee community in Nepal were closed by the authorities in

Kathmandu. Can you shed any light on this situation? Are these offices now able to function normally, or is their fate still in limbo?

Finally have we raised the issue of Nepal with our Chinese interlocutors? It has been contended that the Chinese authorities may be as offended by the Maoist insurgents as Indian authorities are, and is this the case?

We look forward to your testimony and dialogue on these and other issues of concern. Mr. Faleomavaega.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Leach follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JAMES A. LEACH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF IOWA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

On behalf of the Subcommittee, I would like to welcome our distinguished witness to our hearing this afternoon. I would note that we were originally scheduled to have Assistant Secretary Rocca appear before us today. However, she is under the weather and so our able substitute will be Donald Camp, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the South Asia Bureau of the Department of State. Don, we appreciate your many years of public service and look forward to your testimony.

As my colleagues know, sandwiched between China and India and home to the soaring Himalayan Mountains, Nepal has long been known as one of the world's most beautiful countries on the planet. A constitutional monarchy since 1990, Nepal has long enjoyed good relations with the United States at the governmental level; while people-to-people ties have also been robust, nurtured in part by the many dedicated Peace Corps volunteers who have so ably served in the world's only Hindu kingdom.

Tragically, however, each year since the onset of a Maoist rebellion in 1996 has seen this country of 24 million ever more starkly challenged, not only by ruthless insurgents, but by a panoply of developmental, governance, and human rights problems that have converged to potentially jeopardize the viability of the state itself.

In the most recent and serious manifestation of Nepal's distress, King Gyanendra sacked the government on February 1, declaring a state of emergency that sharply curtailed civil liberties and took over the reins of government. His dismissal of the government was the third since parliament was dissolved in 2002, when the King first appointed pro-royalist figures to run the government under his direction. Meanwhile, the King attempted to justify the current crackdown on the tenuous assertion that the former government had failed to move forward toward national elections and dialogue with the rebels, as well as, even more doubtfully, the need to "defend multiparty democracy."

As the country has lurched from crisis to crisis, the concern of outside parties has grown commensurately, particularly in Delhi, London and Washington. As we have learned all too painfully over the last half-century of international relations, the United States cannot afford to remain indifferent when geographically remote areas, whether in Afghanistan or Cambodia, come to be dominated by extremist elements with a brutal and hostile agenda.

In this context, from a Congressional perspective the U.S. and other concerned members of the international community have no credible alternative other than to register our deep concern at the latest turn of events and urge in no uncertain terms that the King move quickly to restore constitutional rule and multiparty democracy.

It is self-evident that the countries and organizations with the most extensive ties to Nepal—India, the U.S., the UK, EU and UN—must work together to forge a commonsense agenda designed to bring the King back from an authoritarian precipice which could too easily accelerate a violent Maoist takeover of the government. The question, however, is whether it is too late and, if not, how best to avert worst-case outcomes.

In this regard, the Subcommittee has a number of questions for our Administration witness, including:

- What is the status of detained political leaders and human right activists? How many are under arrest and has the U.S. sought and received access to these people?
- What levers can and should the international community bring to bear in order to influence the decision-making of the royal government? For example, should donors contemplate targeted economic and diplomatic measures de-

signed to exert pressure on the King, the Council of Ministers, and the Royal Nepal Army?

- India and the United Kingdom have frozen military assistance; yet the United States has not. Why is Washington not moving in coordination with its friends and allies on the issue of military aid?
- Have the King's actions made Nepal more or less able to combat the Maoist threat with a credible counterinsurgency strategy? If Nepal is less secure because of the Royal takeover, what are the prospects for a collapse of central authority and a takeover by the Maoists?
- According to groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, human rights conditions in Nepal appear to be deteriorating. How can concerned outside parties help convince the authorities in Kathmandu to restore fundamental freedoms and meaningfully address enforced disappearances and other manifestations of Nepal's human rights crisis?
- Over years Congress has uniquely identified with the Tibetan people and the preservation of their unique cultural heritage. In this regard, I understand that on January 21 several Tibetan welfare offices that tend to the needs of a substantial refugee community in Nepal were closed by the authorities in Kathmandu. Can you shed any light on this situation? Are these offices now able to function normally or is their fate still in limbo?
- Finally, have we aired the issues of Nepal with our Chinese interlocutors? It has been contended that the Chinese authorities may be as offended by the Maoist insurgents as Indian authorities are. Is this the case?

We look forward to your testimony and a dialogue on these and other issues of concern.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate you calling this hearing this afternoon concerning the crisis now happening in Nepal. Nepal ranks among the world's poorest countries. It has been ruled by a hereditary monarchy for almost all of its history.

In 1990, a people power movement led to a new constitution establishing Nepal as a parliamentary democracy, with a constitutional monarch as head of state. Unfortunately, Nepal's experience with democracy has been troubling.

Since 1990 the country has had 15 governments. In early 1996 the leaders of the underground Communist Party of Nepal, the Maoists, launched a people's war in the western regions of Nepal with the aim of replacing the constitutional monarchy with a one-party Communist regime.

This insurgency received little attention until a series of violent police operations led to a widening of the conflict. By 2001, the revolt had spread to the extent that the Army was directed to quell the insurgency.

Four years ago, Nepal faced further destabilization. In June, the Crown Prince massacred the King and other members of the Royal family before taking his own life. Fueled by Maoist propaganda, the murders spawned a web of conspiracy theories, which continued to swell around King Gyanendra, the brother of the slain monarch.

In a move likely to accelerate Nepal's slide into anarchy, King Gyanendra dismissed his hand-picked prime minister, and seized direct control of the Government. To consolidate his control the King also declared a state of emergency, put two political leaders under house arrest, suspended key constitutional rights, and severed communications with the outside world.

Although intensive diplomatic efforts are under way to convince the King to reverse his course, there is widespread concern in the international community that the Royal coup will play into the

hands of the country's most powerful Maoist guerrillas, whose violent insurgency against the Government has left 11 thousand dead since 1996, and with about 2 thousand deaths occurring since 2002.

And given the seriousness and the urgency of the situation, I look forward to hearing from Secretary Camp, and the State Department's position in terms of what is happening now in Nepal.

And, again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for bringing this to the attention of not only our colleagues, but certainly to the public, and I look forward to hearing Mr. Camp's testimony. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Faleomavaega follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM AMERICAN SAMOA

Mr. Chairman:

I want to thank you for holding this hearing on the crisis in Nepal. Nepal ranks among the world's poorest countries and has been ruled by hereditary monarchy for most of its history. In 1990, a people power movement led to a new constitution establishing Nepal as a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch as head of state.

Unfortunately, Nepal's experience with democracy has been troubled. Since 1990, the country has had 15 governments. In early 1996, the leaders of the underground Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) launched a "People's War" in the western regions of Nepal with the aim of replacing the constitutional monarchy with a one-party communist regime. The insurgency received little attention until a series of violent police operations led to a widening of the conflict. By 2001, the revolt had spread to the extent that the army was directed to quell the insurgency.

In 2001, Nepal faced further destabilization. In June, the Crown Prince massacred the king and other members of the royal family before taking his own life. Fueled by Maoist propaganda, the murders spawned a web of conspiracy theories which continue to swirl around King Gyanendra, the brother of the slain monarch.

In a move likely to accelerate Nepal's slide into anarchy, King Gyanendra dismissed his hand-picked Prime Minister and seized direct control of the government. To consolidate his control, the King also declared a state of emergency, put political leaders under house arrest, suspended key constitutional rights and severed communications with the outside world.

Although intensive diplomatic efforts are underway to convince the king to reverse his course, there is widespread concern in the international community that the royal coup will play into the hands of the country's most powerful Maoist guerrillas whose violent insurgency against the government has left 11,000 dead since 1996 with about 6,000 deaths occurring since 2002.

Given the seriousness and urgency of this situation, I look forward to hearing from our witness about what the U.S. is doing to urge the re-establishment of constitutional rule.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you. Donald Camp has been the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs since September 2001. From 1999 to 2001, he was Director for South Asia at the National Security Council. His overseas assignments have included Consul General in Chengdu and political officer postings in Beijing, Columbo, and Bridgetown.

He was a Pearson Fellow in the Office of Senator Paul Simon, one of the truly distinguished Members of the Congress in the 20th century. Prior to the foreign service, Mr. Camp was a Peace Corps volunteer in India.

He has a B.A. Degree from Carlton College, which means he is a midwesterner, and we appreciate that. He is married with two children. Welcome, Secretary Camp. Your full statement will be placed in the record. Proceed as you see fit.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY DONALD CAMP, BUREAU OF SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. CAMP. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Faleomavaega. First of all, I would like to express the regrets of Assistant Secretary Rocca that she could not be here today. She is very much under the weather with the same bug that seems to be taking down much of Washington these days.

But I am very happy to be here to discuss the developments in Nepal. The United States has a strong interest in helping the Nepalese overcome the serious political and developmental problems they face.

Our goal for Nepal can be put quite simply. We want it to be peaceful, prosperous, a democratic country where civil liberties and human rights are protected. However, Nepal confronts the very real possibility that a brutal Maoist insurgency might seize power.

Unity among Nepal's legitimate political forces is key to preventing this. We are deeply troubled by King Gyanendra's February 1 dismissal of the Government, a declaration of a state of emergency, suspension of fundamental rights, and detention of politicians, journalists, and human rights activists.

This serious setback for Nepalese democracy risks eroding even further the Government's ability to resist the insurgency. It must be reversed. King Gyanendra needs to move quickly to reinstate and protect civil and human rights, release those detained, and begin a dialogue with the political parties to restore multiparty democratic institutions under a constitutional monarchy.

In recent years the Maoist presence has spread dramatically throughout Nepal. They have made clear their intention to impose a one-party people's republic, collectivize agriculture, re-educate class enemies, and export their revolution to neighboring states.

The humanitarian ramifications of such a regime would be immense, reminiscent of the nightmare brought upon Cambodia by Pol Pot. Such a regime would almost certainly threaten stability in the region.

The longstanding political impasse between the King and the political parties, and in-fighting between and within the parties themselves, has seriously hampered resistance to the Maoists.

It has frustrated Nepalese caught between human rights abuses by the security forces on one hand, and Maoist violence and brutality on the other. The United States shares with other friends of Nepal, particularly India and the United Kingdom, the firm belief that the Maoist insurgency must be resisted and its root causes addressed.

The Maoists must be convinced that they have to rejoin the political mainstream instead of trying to sweep it away. At the same time the Nepalese people must be convinced that their Government can offer them a better future.

To accomplish this the legitimate political parties and the King must unite in a multiparty democratic framework. Over the past several years, we have pressed Nepal's leaders to follow this course.

We will continue to stress this message as we urge the King to lift the state of emergency, and provide clear road maps for restor-

ing democratic institutions and addressing the insurgency. We will encourage the political leaders as they are released to ensure that their parties rejoin the political process in a constructive manner.

King Gyanendra has said that his recent actions were intended to strengthen Nepal's multiparty democracy, and to bring the Maoist insurgency to an end. He needs quickly to act on these pledges.

Many Nepalese welcomed his February 1 announcement because of their frustration and despair over the years of political impasse as the Maoists gained strength, but they now expect progress and soon.

The King and the political party leaders must sit down and work together to resolve this crisis. To apply Benjamin Franklin's wisdom to their situation, they must hang together or assuredly they will hang separately. We stand ready to help them find ways to cooperate.

Given the stark situation, United States resources and programs are more important than ever in helping Nepal defeat the insurgency, and build a peaceful and prosperous future. We are encouraged by increasing international unity in trying to persuade the Maoists to negotiate a just peace.

Even with peace the country would need to address daunting developmental problems: Poverty, illiteracy, high infant and maternal mortality, trafficking in persons, corruption, torture, and disappearances.

The United States has worked hard with Nepal's leaders to encourage a common stance, vis-a-vis the insurgents, and prior to February 1, we saw some limited success in this regard. As we seek to deal with the repercussions of February 1, we intend to continue to support as appropriate the Government of Nepal's ability effectively to conduct peace talks and prepare for peace.

Nepal's security forces continue to have a critical role in denying the Maoists a military victory. But we now face a dilemma in making decisions about security assistance for Nepal. Until now, we have supported Nepal's military through professional training, modern rifles, and non-lethal equipment.

Our security assistance this fiscal year is about \$2 million. Strong arguments have been made to stop such assistance until the King rolls back the recent political restrictions.

At the same time nobody wants to see Maoist gains at the expense of a less-effective Nepalan military. We need to balance the military risk resulting from cutting aid, with the political risks should there be no resolution of the current political crisis.

We have made it clear to the Government that in the current political situation our security assistance could well be affected. We are also very concerned about abuses and atrocities by Maoists, and human rights abuses by government security forces, including extrajudicial killings and disappearances.

I would mention in this regard that I believe that there is a Human Rights Watch Report that has just come out today on disappearances, and is very, very comprehensive. An important focus of our training and engagement with the Government and its security services will remain the critical need for increased respect for human rights.

We have made it clear to the Government of Nepal that we expect to see appropriate, timely, and transparent investigations of any credible allegations of abuse. We will continue to convey our strong concerns about human rights violations by the security forces to the highest level of the Nepal Government, and urge swift investigation and punishment.

It is also critical to highlight and criticize abuses and atrocities committed systematically and as a matter of strategy by the Maoists. Mr. Chairman, you also mentioned the Tibetan refugee issue. I would like to say that the recent Government order—I think on January 21—to close the Tibetan Refugee Office and the Office of Tibet are very much concerns of ours.

While we have not seen any change in the flow of Tibetan refugees through Nepal, or in the treatment of Tibetan refugees in Nepal, we are encouraging the Government to register the Refugee Office as a fully functioning NGO, and allow them to reopen and play the role that they have played in the past.

Nepal has some of the world's lowest social indicators, and more than half are development assistance, have been earmarked for health and family planning. The assistance to the marginalized part of this country's population is bearing fruit.

Children are receiving critically important Vitamin A supplements and the fertility rate is going down. We continue to work to help prevent and contain HIV/AIDS, and seek to improve access by the poor to non-contaminated drinking water.

I want to assure you and the Committee that the Administration is deeply engaged in Nepal. President Bush's declaration of the United States' support for freedom around the world very much extends to Nepal.

In the coming weeks and months, we will be following through on this commitment, using our diplomatic leverage and assistance resources, working closely with Nepal's friends, and most importantly, encouraging the Nepalese themselves to come forward and come together.

I appreciate the support and interest of you and the Committee, and look forward to working with you toward achieving our goals. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, you asked some questions in your opening statement.

Mr. LEACH. Yes, please go ahead.

Mr. CAMP. I will address those in order. The status of political leadership. The senior most leaders continue to be under house arrest in Kathmandu. Several of the senior leaders have been released in recent days, but the leader of the Nepali Congress Party, Mr. Koirala, the last prime minister, Mr. Deuba, and the head of the main opposition party, Mr. Nepal, are all still under house arrest.

Ambassador Moriarty has made attempts to visit them. He has pulled up in his limousine to their houses and asked to be admitted and has been turned away. Ambassador Moriarty has told the King in no uncertain terms that this is unacceptable. That these people should be released. As it stands now the senior political leadership remains under house arrest.

You also asked what the prospects are for a Maoist takeover. As I said in the statement, it is far from inconceivable. It is something that we don't anticipate, but frankly the King's actions on February 1 probably emboldened the Maoists and in the longer run made it more likely that they are—that the Maoists have basically a stronger position than they did before February 1.

How can outside groups convince the Government of Nepal to restore human rights? This is something that I think we are all engaged in; the U.S. Government, other international organizations, other countries. I think that you will have noticed a certain unity of action among Nepal's friends.

It was widely noted that the Indian, American, and British Ambassadors all were withdrawn at basically the same time, recalled for consultations in their home countries, and virtually the entire international diplomatic corps left as well to show their support for this action, and to show their disapproval of the King's actions.

That kind of international action is noticed, and I think it matters to the King, and it matters to the people of Nepal. Reports by Human Rights Watch, and reports by Amnesty International, are important in bringing wider international attention to these issues.

And I did notice, I believe, that the head of Amnesty International was recently—was just last week in Kathmandu and was received by the King. So that is a good sign that he is paying attention.

You also asked whether we have raised this issue with the Chinese. We have. We have raised it in Beijing, and we raised it in Kathmandu, and I have raised it here in Washington, actually, with the Chinese Embassy. Their official position continues to be that this is an internal matter for Nepal.

But I think it is very clear, including from their private conversations with us, that they are concerned about the implications of stability in the region if nothing else.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Rocca follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CHRISTINA B. ROCCA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss recent disturbing developments in Nepal. The United States has a strong interest in helping the people of that country overcome the serious political problems they face, and the developmental problems from which much of their current political crisis derives. Our ultimate goal for Nepal can be put quite simply: we want Nepal to be a peaceful, prosperous and democratic country where civil liberties and human rights are protected.

However, Nepal confronts the real possibility that a brutal Maoist insurgency might seize power. Unity among Nepal's legitimate political forces is key to preventing that possibility. For this reason we are deeply troubled by King Gyanendra's February 1 dismissal of the government, declaration of a state of emergency, suspension of fundamental rights, and detention of politicians, journalists and human rights activists. This serious setback for Nepalese democracy risks eroding even further the Nepalese Government's ability to resist the insurgency. It must be reversed. King Gyanendra needs to move quickly to reinstate and protect civil and human rights, release those detained under the state of emergency and begin a dialogue with the political parties intended to restore multi-party democratic institutions under a constitutional monarchy.

In recent years, the Maoist presence has spread dramatically throughout Nepal. The Maoists have made clear their intention to impose a one-party "people's republic," collectivize agriculture, "reeducate" class enemies, and export their revolution to neighboring states. The humanitarian ramifications of such a regime would be immense, reminiscent of the nightmare brought upon Cambodia by Pol Pot. Such

a regime would almost certainly threaten stability in the region. Much if not all the progress that the United States and others have helped Nepal accomplish in terms of both development and democratization would be negated.

The longstanding political impasse between the King and the political parties, and infighting between and within the parties themselves, has seriously hampered resistance to the Maoists, in spite of the army's growing capability to militarily confront the insurgents. This squabbling and inability to come to an agreement on how to move forward with democratic governance has understandably frustrated the Nepalese caught between government inaction on their grievances and human rights abuses by the security forces on one hand and Maoist violence and brutality on the other.

The United States shares with other friends of Nepal—particularly India and the United Kingdom—the firm belief that the Maoist insurgency must be resisted and addressed. The Maoists have risen to prominence through a combination of propaganda, terror, and the real despair that so many Nepalese feel over the paralysis and failure of their political institutions. However, Nepalese increasingly reject the Maoists' goal of a one-party republic and no longer tolerate their methods of torture, extortion, and harsh retributions. The Maoists must be convinced that they have to rejoin the political mainstream instead of trying to sweep it away. At the same time, the Nepalese people must be convinced that their government can offer them a better future. The key to accomplishing this is for the legitimate political parties and Nepal's King to unite in a multi-party, democratic framework in order to confront the Maoists and address the country's serious developmental problems. Over the past several years we have pressed political party leaders and the King to follow this course. We will continue to stress this message to the King as we also urge him to lift the state of emergency and provide clear roadmaps of how he intends to restore democratic institutions and address the Maoist insurgency. Likewise, we will encourage the political leaders as they are released to ensure their parties rejoin the political process in a constructive manner in order to chart the way ahead.

King Gyanendra has said that his recent actions were intended to strengthen Nepal's multi-party democracy and to bring the Maoist insurgency to an end. The King needs to quickly demonstrate through actions that he is serious in this desire. He does not have much time. Initial reaction from many Nepalese to his February 1 actions was positive, reflecting their widespread frustration and despair over the years of political impasse as the Maoists gained strength. The Nepalese people now expect progress, and they expect it soon. The government needs to release the detainees and lift the suspension of fundamental rights. The King and the political party leaders must sit down and work together to resolve this crisis—they need to work together and must recognize this fact. To apply Benjamin Franklin's wisdom to their situation, they must hang together, or assuredly, they shall hang separately. We stand ready to help them find ways to cooperate to overcome the challenges to the future of their country.

Given this stark situation, U.S. resources and programs are more important than ever in helping Nepal defeat the insurgency and build a peaceful and prosperous future. We are encouraged that over the past year the international community has become increasingly united in trying to persuade the Maoists to negotiate a just peace. Even if peace were to return, however, the country would need to address daunting problems before it could develop into a prosperous, stable democracy: poverty, illiteracy, infant and maternal mortality, trafficking in persons, corruption, torture, and disappearances. Key to progress in all these areas is economic development throughout the country.

The United States has worked hard with Nepal's leaders to encourage them to adopt a common stance vis-a-vis the insurgents, and prior to February 1 we saw some limited success in this regard. The King's actions at the beginning of this month have only reinforced our conviction that ending the insurgency requires unity between the King and the politicians. As we seek to deal with the repercussions of February 1, we intend to continue to support, as appropriate, the Government of Nepal's ability to effectively conduct peace talks and prepare for peace. Nepal's security forces continue to have a critical role in denying the Maoists a military victory. Donor assistance has been an important factor in their ability to mount more effective security operations, creating an environment for increased delivery of much-needed services for Nepalese civilians—taking back areas hitherto controlled by the Maoists.

This brings me to the dilemma that we now face in making decisions about security assistance for Nepal, Mr. Chairman. U.S. security assistance for Nepal this fiscal year is about \$2 million. Strong arguments have been made to use such assistance as a lever with Nepal's Government to encourage a rollback of the recent political restrictions. At the same time, nobody wants to see Maoist gains at the expense

of a less effective Nepali military. In considering this issue we are very aware of the trade-off between the military risk resulting from cutting aid with the political risk should there be no resolution of the current crisis between the King and the parties. Following on the King's actions, India and the United Kingdom announced they were suspending assistance to Nepal's armed forces. We have the same step under consideration. We have made it clear to the Government that in the current political situation our security assistance is at risk. In our security assistance so far, we have supported Nepal's military through professional training, modern rifles and non-lethal equipment. A central part of our program has been to reinforce the critical need for the security forces, some of whom have engaged in serious human rights abuses, to improve their record in this respect.

We are concerned about abuses and atrocities by Maoists and human rights abuses by government security forces including extra-judicial killings and "disappearances". An important focus of our training of, and engagement with, the Government and its security services will remain the critical need for increased respect for human rights. We continue to vet units receiving U.S. assistance to ensure that none is implicated in human rights violations. An amendment to the FY 2005 Senate Appropriations bill stipulated that Foreign Military Financing could be made available to Nepal if the Secretary of State determined that Nepal was taking a number of steps to improve the human rights practices of the security forces. We have made it clear to the Government of Nepal that we expect to see appropriate, timely and transparent investigations of any credible allegations of abuse and that failure to do so could jeopardize our ability to continue assistance. We will continue to convey our strong concern about human rights violations by the security forces to the highest levels of the Nepal government and urge swift investigation and punishment.

We have allocated resources to the National Human Rights Commission to assist with recording and storing human rights investigations. As appropriate, we plan to provide additional assistance to the Commission to expand its monitoring and reporting capabilities. It is also critical for us and for the international community to highlight and criticize atrocities and abuses committed—systematically, and as a matter of strategy—by the Maoists. We will also continue to stress the protection of the rights of marginalized and victimized groups (e.g., trafficked persons, forced and child laborers, including child soldiers). We are seeking a durable solution for the more than 100,000 refugees of Bhutanese origin in Nepal and continue to work closely with UNHCR and NGOs to assure the welfare of the many resident and transiting Tibetans in Nepal. The recent Government order to close of the Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office and the Dalai Lama's office are also concerns. While we have not seen any change in the flow of Tibetan refugees through Nepal or in the treatment of Tibetan refugees resident in Nepal, we are working with the Government to register the Office as a fully functioning NGO.

The overwhelming preponderance of the assistance the United States is providing to Nepal—20 times the amount of our security aid—is devoted to the social, political and economic development the country so desperately needs. One of our key priorities in Nepal is to strengthen democratic institutions and processes, thereby increasing the ability of all Nepalese to have their voice heard. This in turn will undermine the Maoist insurgency whose early progress reflected to some degree the legitimate grievances of Nepal's marginalized citizens. Our work will continue to focus on the restoration of democratic institutions and seek to increase citizen participation and representational diversity in key institutions and processes. We will provide assistance with respect to the planning and conduct of parliamentary elections, if and when they are held. We will also focus on strengthening key rule of law and anti-corruption institutions.

Nepal has some of the world's lowest social indicators, and more than half our development assistance has been earmarked for health and family planning. This key assistance to the marginalized part of this country's population is bearing fruit: the vast majority of Nepal's under-five children receive critical Vitamin-A supplements, thereby significantly increasing their ability to fight off otherwise deadly diseases such as pneumonia. The fertility rate is going down and we continue to work to help prevent and contain HIV/AIDS. Through the coordinated efforts by USAID and the Kathmandu-based Regional Environmental Office, we seek to improve access by the poor to non-contaminated drinking water.

Mr. Chairman, I want to assure you and the Committee that the Administration is deeply engaged in helping to resolve the current crisis in Nepal. President Bush's declaration of the United States' support for freedom around the world very much extends to Nepal. This Administration firmly believes in the expansion of liberty and freedom as the foundation for lasting stability. In the coming weeks and months, we will be following through on this commitment, using our diplomatic le-

verage and assistance resources, working closely with Nepal's friends and, most importantly, encouraging the Nepalese themselves to come together to meet these very serious challenges. I appreciate the support and interest of you and the Committee and look forward to working with you toward this goal.

Thank you. I would be happy to take questions.

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you very much. Since I unfairly raised questions in my opening statement, I would like to turn to Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Camp, you mentioned earlier that we have given about \$2 million. Is this an IMET program that we have for Nepal?

Mr. CAMP. In the current fiscal year, it is \$1.5 million of FMF and about \$500 thousand of IMET.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. It is IMET?

Mr. CAMP. IMET is a portion of that, yes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. How long have we been doing this program for Nepal?

Mr. CAMP. IMET for Nepal? I would say it is not a new program. It has been going on for at least 10 years before the Maoist problem arose.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. And at this point in time, we are still continuing the program and training the military forces there?

Mr. CAMP. We are continuing the IMET program. We think that training is a very important aspect of our relationship with Nepal. We think that we are training the Nepalese military in the values, as well as the skills, that we hold in our military and we would like to continue that.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Now, we are not training them how to use tanks and 155 howitzers, or is it strictly light arms, machine guns, 51 caliber?

Mr. CAMP. Exactly, and we have provided over the last couple of years a substantial number of M-16 rifles, and so that is one of the training areas. But also I would add human rights, medical trauma issues, things like that as well.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. My concern is that we always do things with good intentions, and we end up with bad consequences. Indonesia is a classic example, where we have, over a period of 20 or 30 years, trained the military in Indonesia, and they turned around and tortured and murdered hundreds of thousands of East Timorese and West Papuans.

So that is where I am coming from as far as how we are using the IMET. So it is like we are giving them the rifle, and all they need to do is to pull the trigger, and like I said, we do have good intentions with the use of the IMET. But for whose purpose is it really being utilized now; for the purpose of protecting the King? Is it done for the purpose of protecting the people, or maybe you can help me on this.

Mr. CAMP. Sure.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Or are we giving more fire to the Maoists to justify their actions by looking at the fact that we are providing military hardware and training for the King? And it gets to the point where you ask, "Is he a King or is he a dictator?"

Mr. CAMP. I am sorry, a King, or—

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. A King or a dictator.

Mr. CAMP. Well, without in any way denying, or making, or lessening the abuses committed by the military, I would only say that the purpose of our training is to make them a better fighting force against the Maoists, because that is the major crisis facing Nepal, the potential takeover by the Maoists, and that is what we are trying to do with our military assistance.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I recall at the height of the Cold War, a good example was Marcos of The Philippines. He just declared martial law and said there is a whole bunch of Communists out there, and so therefore, I am going to be doing martial law for the next 20 years.

There was no democracy, and yet we accepted that as something that was very undemocratic, and my concern as you mentioned is that there are abuses by both the King and the Maoists. So the people are left as victims.

Mr. CAMP. That is right.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. And that is where the rubber meets the road. Where do you find the solution and say who is doing right and who is doing wrong?

And I am curious if the King in his own honest way is really trying to provide stability and order, and the reason why he needs the military. And the question here is whether he is using it for positive purposes, or is he just simply killing for the sake of it?

And I don't think the King would do that, would he? I mean, you know him better than I do, and so what do you think?

Mr. CAMP. I think that he is genuinely concerned about the Maoist insurgency. I don't think that the action that he took on February 1 was in fact conducive to achieving the goals that he and the Nepali people want.

I would say that our goal must be to convince the King that what he did 3 weeks ago, or 4 weeks ago, was wrong and was a serious mistake, and he needs to reverse it, and he needs to restore power to the democratic parties. He needs to restore civil liberties and human rights.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Now, China has not made any claim that Nepal was an ancient part of China, just like they have done to Tibet?

Mr. CAMP. No.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. That is an absolute? They are not making any claims that Nepal was a province of China in ancient times? There is a distinct ethnicity and cultural differences here, or nothing whatsoever?

Mr. CAMP. There is no territorial claim at all.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. No minerals, no oil, nothing that would help Nepal economically in some way? How do the people survive? What is the economic base of Nepal by the way?

Mr. CAMP. To a large extent, it is in the rural areas, it is subsistence agriculture, and the rural areas of Nepal continue to be very, very backward, without access to social services, and I would say the urban Nepali society has been based in recent years on textiles, tourism—

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. No opium?

Mr. CAMP. I am sorry?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. No opium?

Mr. CAMP. No opium. That is not a problem in Nepal.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Not yet?

Mr. CAMP. Not yet.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you. Mr. Blumenauer.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I am wondering if you could elaborate on the role that India is playing. You have referenced it, and they have suspended military assistance evidently.

Mr. CAMP. Sure.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. How is this playing out with New Delhi?

Mr. CAMP. Well, let me first say that India in our view plays an absolutely critical role in all of this. India, as far as Nepal is concerned, is the major power. The United States is far away. India is right next door. India has the most influence and the most leverage on this situation, and I must say the most to lose if things go bad, and the Government of India has focused very much on this issue.

We have consulted with the Government of India, and we have tried to work with them as much as possible to sort of coordinate our approach because I think we have a common goal here, which is—or two common goals if you will—to make sure that the Maoists do not succeed, and to restore democracy to Nepal.

The Indians have been, I would say, a little bit more further along than we are in terms of suspending assistance. We have not made a decision to suspend assistance. We are reviewing it and seeing how the situation develops. We would prefer not to.

But India has been very, very firm in its conviction that the King just move very quickly to restore civil liberties and democratic freedoms.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. And do you want to elaborate on that? I am curious. They suspended aid, and they have been firm, and we are a step behind.

Mr. CAMP. I think that the Indian Government has—do you want me to expand on what the Indians are doing?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Yes.

Mr. CAMP. They have—the Indian Ambassador in Kathmandu has gone in to see the King, and, we understand, made the case that the King needs to take these actions urgently.

They have not attempted, I would say, to threaten in any way, at least—you know, they have taken a position much like we have, which is this is in the interests of Nepal. You need to do this, and this is not helpful to your goal, Your Majesty, of defeating the Maoist insurgency.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. And your point about the Indians having the most to lose: Actually, the three of us were recently in the Asian region, and had an opportunity to meet with a variety of officials in the Indian Government.

I must confess that I continue to be impressed by the way that the Indian Government not only responded in the aftermath of the tsunami, but is extending its interests in a very constructive and positive, and proactive way.

I walk away concerned about how closely we are, frankly, working with the Indian Government in some other areas, and perhaps

sending mixed signals, and I am curious about how we are coordinating with them.

You are referencing that we are a little behind where the Indian Government has been in terms of response. How are we coordinating with them in the midst of this latest round of the crisis?

Mr. CAMP. Well, very soon after February 1, and in fact on February 1, I think, we began discussions in Delhi between the Indian foreign secretary and our Ambassador in Delhi.

Our Ambassador in Kathmandu is very close to the Indian Ambassador, and consults frequently. My boss, Assistant Secretary Rocca, has been on the phone frequently to Indian Ambassador Ronen Singh here in Washington.

So we are really, at all levels and in all locations, talking about this issue of what we can be doing to better coordinate. That does not mean that we are in lock step by any means. I mean, they have their own interests in Nepal and so do we.

But certainly I think that we are trying to sort of use the strengths that both nations have in Nepal to try and achieve the same end.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. And I ask this question because I am not certain of the order of magnitude, but are the United States and India the two countries that have invested the most, with maybe the possible exception of Great Britain, in military, and economic, and social assistance to the Nepalese Government?

Mr. CAMP. I would say that India and the United States, it is my guess, would be the largest providers of assistance. Great Britain has particular interest as you mentioned because of the tradition of the Gurkhas and the Gurkhas pensioners who are in Nepal.

So the U.K. maintains a very strong interest in what happens in Nepal, and we have been working closely with them as well, I might add.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. And how was the decision made to suspend the Peace Corps activities?

Mr. CAMP. That was actually made before this, before February 1, and it was made strictly on security grounds, and with great regret, because the Peace Corps has had such a long and rather glorious history in Nepal, over 40 years. But we came to the conclusion that we just could not risk this.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I think that our colleague, Jim Walsh, was a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal.

Mr. CAMP. That is absolutely right, yes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LEACH. Have we or any outside powers had any direct talks with the Maoists?

Mr. CAMP. We do not have discussions with the Maoists, and I am not aware of anyone that has had official discussions with the Maoists. There are people in Kathmandu who style themselves as liaison with the Maoists. They may well be members themselves, and these people are sort of well known in Kathmandu.

And they were in fact helped to set up some of the dialogue between the Nepal Government and the Maoists at one time. We have not had any direct contact with the Maoists.

Mr. LEACH. Do we have any good sense on what the Maoists—what their grievances are, and what they seek?

Mr. CAMP. They say that they want a partyless democracy. They want a republic. They want to end the monarchy. But in fact their tactics suggest that they want a rather brutal one-party rule should they gain power.

Mr. LEACH. Are there any proposals for outside interlocutors to try to bring the parties together? And is there any division—I mean, are all Maoists violent? Are some not? Are there divisions within the movement?

I mean, when people say they control half the country, that is a big amount of land, and a big number of people. So everyone presumably isn't a violent activist, but are the violent activists in complete command?

Mr. CAMP. Up until 1996, they were really part of the political system of Nepal, and they broke off from the United Marxist-Leninist Party. The main opposition party in Kathmandu today is called the United Marxist-Leninists.

And the folks who split off and decided to take the violent route in 1996 have styled themselves Maoists, and from then on that is really the violent non-democratic faction of the Kathmandu political wing.

Mr. LEACH. So if the Marxist-Leninists side are the liberals, then these guys are pretty much outside the mainstream is what you are saying?

Mr. CAMP. That is correct.

Mr. LEACH. In terms of the United States, when countries or governments are responsible for imperfect human rights records, we sometimes raise these issues at the Commission on Human Rights, the U.N. Commission. Do we expect to raise Nepal?

Mr. CAMP. That is an issue we are thinking very seriously about right now. There was a proposal last year to do what I believe is called an Item 9 Resolution on Nepal.

At the time, we thought that the resolution equated the Government of Nepal and the Maoists, and we did not want to have any part of a resolution that seemed to equate the two. That is still true.

As to what we will do in an Item 9 or Item 19 Resolution at the Commission on Human Rights this year, we have simply not decided.

Mr. LEACH. Do we support the concept of an appointment of a special rapporteur for Nepal?

Mr. CAMP. An issue has only just come up, and so we do not have a position on that. I have seen the proposal by Amnesty in particular, but we have not really discussed that issue.

Mr. LEACH. Well, at first blush, it seems like something should be creditably reviewed. The difficulty, and you indicated this in your testimony, is, How does the United States make policy judgments in imperfect settings? This is obviously one.

Do you have any prognostications on where we will be a year from now, or 2 years from now?

Mr. CAMP. Well, I do not think we will be where we are because I can't imagine that the King—well, I should not be so confident, but I think that the King needs to move rapidly back to at least the status quo ante. We need to have some kind of return to a political process in Nepal.

Even the system that existed before February 1 was not an ideal situation by a long-shot. I think we need to move beyond that, but for starters, we have to get back to where we were before February 1, and I believe that there will be some movement in that regard.

Mr. LEACH. I am told that as much as abstractly as Americans we all support democracy, this has not been a perfectly functioning democratic setting, both individually and institutionally. Is that valid and how is it imperfect?

Mr. CAMP. Oh, it is absolutely valid. I think that part of the problem has been that Nepal being the kind of country it is—spread out, largely illiterate, or heavily illiterate—the democratic system really as we know it is only about 12 years old, 13 years old.

And so they have not developed the sorts of structures and systems that many of the countries in the region, such as India, already have. So we have not had a functioning parliament as you noted in your statement, Mr. Chairman, since 2002 in Kathmandu.

Mr. LEACH. Well, I would only say that I have a lot of sympathy for the dilemmas that the Department is facing, and I think the Congress is going to want to back you in your expressions of concern for human rights and expressions of concern in returning to a more democratic dialogue with Nepal.

In terms of aid on the non-military side, I think it would be a mistake to pull back, and I think one of the great questions is, Do you go through governments or private sector, and do we do that often in countries in which governments are imperfect?

But I think from a people-to-people point of view that Congress would like to indicate a lot of support for the dilemma for the Nepalese people, and an extraordinary amount of angst with the Government, and I think we share that with the Executive Branch.

Also, as a society, we have non-governmental organizations like Amnesty that have done really yeoman work, and this Committee wants to tip its hat to those that have taken on the task of reviewing on a constant basis the human rights situation in Nepal.

There are very few countries in the world where one could have more hope. There is no reason that Nepal should be part of an international playground between divisions of east, west, north, south, or whatever divisions one might demarcate. And then let me turn again to Mr. Faleomavaega. Go ahead.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Thank you. Do you have a count of how many Nepalese live here in the United States?

Mr. CAMP. I am sorry?

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. How many people from Nepal live here in the United States?

Mr. CAMP. You know, I don't the answer to that question.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. I would be curious. I just am curious.

Mr. CAMP. I will get that to you. I simply do not know, and I would hesitant to hazard a guess, but I will get back to you on that, sir.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. There was a concern earlier about the possibility of a Maoist takeover. Is there any connection with the Maoist leaders and the followers in Nepal to the Communist Party in China?

Mr. CAMP. I think I can safely say that there is no connection whatsoever, sir. Certainly the Government of the People's Republic of China denies it, and we have seen no evidence to suggest that there is any connection at all. This is a homegrown insurgency. They happen to have taken on the political philosophy in the name of Mao Tse Tung.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. So there has been no communication either between the Communists, or I mean the Maoists leaders with the Government of China in any way, like asking for help? We are brothers in the same political bowl, and we need your help?

Mr. CAMP. There may have been one-way communication, but I am pretty confident that there has been no response from the Government of China.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Not yet anyway. You indicated earlier that India does play a very major role in the situation in Nepal, and I don't like hypotheticals, but might there be a possibility that the King, in his good disposition, might request the Indian Government to send troops to Nepal to provide stability and order in his country?

Do you think that you might see that as a possibility down the road? Let us say the King is really helpless, and you mentioned that India does have a major role to play in this.

Suppose the King asks India to send military troops over to help him quell all these Maoists running around trying to kill him. Would that be a positive direction in getting rid of these Maoist extremists?

Mr. CAMP. I think that I would not want to speak for the Government of India in this case. Our own view is that this is an issue that the Nepalese have to resolve for themselves, and that this is not something that other countries really can assist in, and ultimately it has to be up to the Nepalese themselves.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. That is why I don't like hypotheticals, Secretary Camp, but here is another question. Out of the 24 million people we have in Nepal, how many are Maoists?

Mr. CAMP. I would say practicing cadres have to be in the low thousands, is my guess. Fighters, more, but they are not necessarily the ideologues of the movement, if you will. It is a fairly small movement. They have gotten where they have by intimidation basically.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Well, what prompted these people to become Maoists? Is it because of the ruthlessness of the monarchy, or have they done things to these families, or people in certain parts of the country in such a way that they became Maoists or socialists?

Mr. CAMP. I think there are a number of different reasons. I think there are those who are simply ideologues who started with a philosophy that says that the King, or the monarchy is wrong for Nepal. We need to develop a classless society.

And they probably were affected by some of the Chinese political philosophies, if you will, but I also think that they were able to recruit from a large number of people in rural Nepal who are jobless, ill-educated, have no potential for economic success in life.

There is not much economic opportunity in rural Nepal, and it breeds this kind of discontent with the system, with the wealthy in Kathmandu.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Was it because these people are starving to death? I mean, we went through this same ideological problem in Vietnam. They say that the Viet Cong are the most uneducated people. People don't care about ideology.

They just want to live for a pot of rice and the next day, and that is how the recruiting of the Communists became so prominent, because these people did not—there was nothing to eat, and nothing more that they could depend on. Now you are mentioning the same ideal that produces people that think politically this way, and I am just curious. You had indicated earlier about human rights, and it could be a very serious issue in Nepal.

My concern is, how can we be talking about human rights when we are talking about one of the poorest countries that could probably hardly even—their level of education is so low, and the King is trying to save his own life.

And we are trying to say, hey, human rights violations. It does not make any sense to me how we could be driving them to the wall about human rights when economically, politically, and socially it is near impossible to even write a paper about human rights.

I don't see how we can justify pressuring them about human rights violations when we have some very fundamental issues that they cannot even resolve themselves.

Mr. CAMP. I would not use the word starvation—it is the general state outside the Kathmandu valley and outside the cities, and that means people are impoverished, and people may have enough to eat, but they do not have any future to look forward to.

But I would argue that what we should be doing is—and what we are doing—is pursuing economic development, and education, pressing the Government of Nepal to do more in both of those areas, and supporting them to the extent that we can through our aid program. But not saying that we cannot discuss human rights, and we can't try and provide these people, even if poor, with civil liberties and basic rights.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. We have got a multibillion dollar problem with opium poppy in Afghanistan, and we are trying to encourage these people to go into farming, and if we really could be serious, what are the possible options with the Nepalese people and their leaders to really turn toward making some very serious economic development?

You mentioned agriculture, but in what respect? Subsistence agriculture, but what can they do commercially to compete with other countries in a way that economic growth and all of that comes into play?

Mr. CAMP. Well, to some extent, Nepal is where it is economically because of the topography. People are in these isolated villages where it takes 3 or 4 days to walk out to the road.

And until there is a basic infrastructure in rural Nepal, we are not going to see development of the kind that we would like to see. But once you have roads into a region, you can do cash crops, and sell them in India, or sell them to Kathmandu or whatever.

At the moment, there is just simply no transportation out there, and that is the basic reason, or a basic reason, why people are so poor.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Well, one quick note. There is no fear of refugees or anything if things really start getting worse in Nepal?

Mr. CAMP. I would think that India might have some concerns about such a problem for the future.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Camp.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Blumenauer.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no further questions. I would just like to express my appreciation for you sort of forcing us to address this issue.

The time that I have spent over the last couple of years reviewing from a distance of what I know of the situation, it is like an auto accident, and you want to avert your eyes, but you keep coming back.

I am clearly concerned about what has been raised here, and in the testimony that has been provided from Amnesty International and other documents here that are in our file, that the Government risks being in a tough situation in the near future as long as this persists.

And the record is disturbing. Obviously the Maoist elements have perpetrated horrific abuse on people. I hope that there is a way that maybe with the general prodding of this Committee, the extent to which wisdom can be distilled up with the interaction to encourage more concerted effort with our friends and allies in that region for this troubled country.

I also just would note that when we are talking about people disappearing, and we talk about abused people, and that I hope that our Committee, maybe our Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, can get to the heart of some of the allegations about patterns of abuse of American-held prisoners, the practice of rendition.

There are things that I would like us to be crystal clear about and have clean hands, and get to the bottom of questions about what we do, because all of the world's countries are going to have to be working to avoid what happens in the heat of the moment battle in response to terrorism.

It is ultimately the respect for the rule of law, and it is transparency. It is holding ourselves and our friends to high standards, and I deeply appreciate this opportunity to reflect what you have offered us. And I am hopeful that we can continue to in a gentle way have our Committee be able to spotlight and move this discussion forward.

Mr. LEACH. Well, I thank you. Yes, Mr. Camp?

Mr. CAMP. May I have a moment? My colleague in the row behind me has just given me an answer to Mr. Faleomavaega's question. There are 70 thousand Nepalese, more or less, living in the United States. So that is one thing.

And the other thing is that I would just like to say that I appreciate, as a representative of the Executive Branch, this opportunity to get congressional views, because we are right in the midst of discussing where we go on policy toward Nepal, and so this is very valuable to us as well, and I thank you for that.

Mr. LEACH. Well, I thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Let me just conclude with the observation that this is a circumstance, pol-

icy-wise, where imperfect conclusions are going to be made because the situation is imperfect.

And what this Committee more than anything wants to express is our deep concern for the Nepalese people, and I am sure as a Congress that we share that with the Executive Branch, and the fate and future of Nepal.

The United States has a longstanding relationship from great distance with Nepal, and it is one of a great deal of respect for the problems of the country and the people, and we hope that reasoned judgments can be brought to bear at high levels of Government, and that reconciliation can occur, and how that is going to be achieved is not clear on the table.

There do not seem to be clear roadmaps from the international community other than asking for the Government itself to have clearer roadmaps within Nepal, and I think if there is any advice that the Committee might want to give, it would be that we might want to put our mind to very precise roadmaps that we want to recommend for the Nepalese Government.

And very precise ways how we can help in that circumstance, because as much as I am supportive of where we are, I don't have a tremendous sense that we have really applied great discipline to whatever art that may exist in taking future steps, and how you precipitate those steps.

And I think that is where our Government might want to, in consultation with the Indians and the Brits, and conceivably even the Chinese, give some considered thought. The good news at the moment is that your observations about the use of the word Mao not being tied to the activist involvement of the Chinese, and that is one of the reasons in the world why it is important to have a very open and straightforward dialogue with other parties other than those that are directly involved.

And the fact that you have had such discussions with the Chinese, I think, is very helpful and that ought to be ongoing. The Committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:28 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF T. KUMAR, ADVOCACY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA & PACIFIC,
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for allowing Amnesty International to submit a testimony at this important hearing.

A human rights catastrophe is looming in Nepal following the declaration of the state of emergency by King Gyanendra on 1 February.

The longstanding conflict between the Maoists and the armed forces has destroyed human rights in the countryside. Now, the state of emergency is destroying human rights in the urban areas, taking the country to the brink of disaster.

The state of emergency has strengthened the hand of the security forces, reduced the prospect of a political process towards peace and increased the likelihood of escalation of the conflict that could lead to even greater human suffering and abuse.

Political leaders, students, human rights activists, journalists and trade unionists were arrested in the immediate aftermath of the declaration of the state of emergency. While some leaders have been released, more are being arrested, particularly at the district level.

There is strict media censorship enforced by the army and a total clamp down on political dissent. A number of leading human rights activists, journalists and trade union leaders are in hiding or have fled the country. There is a deep sense of fear, uncertainty and insecurity among the people.

Nepal's dynamic civil society is being crippled by this state of emergency. Those who were exposing and condemning the excesses of the armed forces and the atrocities of the Maoists are now being muzzled. This will only serve to fuel impunity and reinforce the ongoing cycle of human rights abuses by both the security forces and the Maoists, with disastrous consequences for the ordinary people of Nepal.

Recent reports by Amnesty International demonstrate a dramatic increase in the scale of human rights abuses since the breakdown of the cease-fire in August 2003, including torture, detention, disappearances, displacement, abductions and unlawful killings. During visits to Nepalgunj, Biratnagar and Kathmandu jail, Amnesty International delegates met recent victims of human rights abuse by the security forces as well as the Maoists, including rape survivors, child soldiers and torture victims.

Even though the King assured his commitment to uphold human rights and Nepal's international obligations; the King will be judged, not by his promises, but by how those promises are put into action by his government.

As major allies of Nepal and key providers of military aid, the US, UK and India play a critical role. They have been outspoken about the restoration of democracy. They need to give equal importance to ensuring the Nepalese government guarantees respect for human rights. For the vast majority of the people of Nepal, democracy is meaningless without human rights.

Given the alliance between the palace and the military, the role of the security forces in restricting and violating human rights, and their increased significance during the state of emergency—donors should suspend all military assistance to the Government as a means of pressurizing it to change its human rights policies.

Time is running out—Nepal is on a downward spiral. The international community has consistently failed the people of Nepal over the past decade. It must not do so again.

Amnesty International is calling on:

The U.S. Administration to:

- Sponsor a Nepal Resolution at the upcoming UN Commission on Human Rights
- Suspend military aid to the Government of Nepal as a means of pressure to change its human rights policies;
- Appoint at the forthcoming UN Commission on Human Rights a Special Rapporteur to scrutinize Nepal's human rights record.

The United Nations to:

- Verify that Nepalese troops who are to be deployed in peace keeping operations have not been implicated in human rights violations in Nepal;
- Establish a mission of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal to protect human rights defenders, support the National Human Rights Commission and strengthen the judiciary.

The Government of Nepal to:

- Urgently restore fundamental human rights suspended during the state of emergency, and open a political process for resolving the conflict, based on justice and respect for human rights;
- Protect human rights defenders, journalists, trade unionists and other activists, including providing safe passage for those seeking temporary sanctuary in other countries, and guaranteeing the safety of those who remain in Nepal;
- Take effective steps to end impunity of the security forces, including independent investigations and trial of human rights crimes by civilian and not military courts.

The Maoists to:

- Commit themselves to respect international humanitarian law;
- Stop targeting civilians.

The Government of Nepal and the Maoist leadership to agree on a Human Rights Accord to ensure respect for human rights at all times during the conflict.

